



ESF 8 Health & Medical Area Command Bulletin

PREPARING FOR FLOODING IN THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY

August 7, 2009 Bulletin #3

Note to reader:

Because some aspects of the Howard Hanson Dam situation will not change, Information that is new will be preceded with "New".



Situation:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has discovered damage to a portion of the Howard Hanson Dam. This dam has controlled flooding in the Green River Valley for the last 40 years, however the dam will only operate at 30% capacity this winter. Therefore, there is a much greater risk of significant flooding during periods of heavy rain throughout the lower Green River Valley, affecting the cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila.

The USACE is actively testing and investigating the source of the problems and trying to identify solutions. The USACE has significantly reduced the water storage levels at the Dam and is taking a number of steps to try and minimize the flood risk. However, the USACE does not anticipate a full solution to the problems with the Dam by this flood season. The cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton and Tukwila and King County government agencies are working closely with the USACE to prepare for the 2009 flood season.

Additional information is available at the USACE website:

http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Doc_list.cfm?sitename=HHD&pagename=Pool_Restriction

ESF 8- Health, Medical & Mortuary Response Planning Assumptions:

Health and Medical Area Command has established a set of planning assumptions regarding the risk for flooding in the Green River Valley. These assumptions help guide ongoing planning by the Area Command and can be used to help guide the individual planning activities of our partner organizations:

- Continuity of health, medical & mortuary services in King County is essential to the public's health and safety
- Flooding will impact regional health, medical & mortuary service providers, businesses, local, state & federal government agencies & local residents, including vulnerable populations
- Organizations & residents outside of the directly flooded areas may also experience power outages, natural gas disruption & impacts to sewer systems
- Flooding may result in a variety of environmental health impacts
- Evacuation of healthcare facilities & medically vulnerable residents may be necessary
- Primary transportation routes & transit service will be impacted, therefore affecting supply, staff & patient movement
- Medical needs shelters may be required to shelter & ensure medical care is available to patients or medically vulnerable residents
- Coordinated health & safety messaging is essential to protecting the public's health
- Impacted public & private organizations may have to implement business continuity plans including, but not limited to facility or service relocation or alternate employee work assignments

New Sign up for email alerts from Public Health – Seattle & King County about the Howard Hanson Dam:

http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/greenriverbasin.aspx

About this Bulletin:

Public Health –Seattle & King County activated the Health & Medical Area Command on July 7 to coordinate health, planning for regional hazards including H1N1 influenza and the Howard Hanson Dam – **Green River Valley** flood risks. We will be issuing weekly bulletins on one of these topics to outline key situational updates, planning activities and health, medical and

What is Health & Medical Area Command?

Area Command is an incident management tool used to coordinate emergency multiple jurisdictions, and among multiple agencies vying for the same resources. Health & Medical Area Command coordinates health information, resources and sets policy decisions for the county-wide health response during a disaster. The health, medical and mortuary Area Commander, who reports to the Local Health Officer.

Current Planning Activities

Public Health and the Health and Medical Area Command staff are actively working with local city emergency managers, King County, and other planning partners to assess potential impacts to Public Health operations, healthcare facilities and medically vulnerable residents and develop plans for response. This work includes:

- New Identification of alternate animal shelter sites and ensuring capabilities to provide veterinary support to King County Animal Shelter operations
- New Collaboration with King County Department of Natural Resources & Parks and city leadership regarding solid waste and debris management
- New Coordination with home health, home care agencies and Aging & Disability Services to determine client vulnerability and establish outreach strategies
- New Coordination with other county departments, cities and state agencies to evaluate the risks from hazardous materials and to implement mitigation strategies
- Assessment of flood and infrastructure impacts to healthcare facilities in the target impact area
- Coordination with local and county governments regarding notification/warning and evacuation protocol
- Coordination with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to plan for healthcare facility evacuations
- Developing plans to activate medical needs shelters or alternate care facilities (ACFs) to support healthcare facility evacuation
- Coordination with sewer districts, the Washington Department of Ecology and other environmental service agencies to assess potential health impacts
- Outreach to adult family homes and nursing homes to support plans for transportation and patient placement
- Assessment of impacts to mortuary providers and mortuary services county-wide
- Development of educational materials for flood preparedness and response
- Business continuity planning for Public Health operations

For more information:

US Army Corps of Engineers

http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Doc_list.cfm?sitename=HHD&pagename=Pool_Restriction

King County Office of Emergency Management

http://www.kingcounty.gov/safety/prepare/FloodPlan_GRiverBasin.aspx

Questions? Please email

healtheoc@kingcounty.gov

New Business Continuity Tips

Below are 3 practical tips for preparing your organization to manage the impacts of a flood in the Green River Valley:

✓ Identify your essential services and critical functions

What are the primary services your organization must continue to provide if the flood occurs? Consider functions such as payroll, human resources and medical records.

Once you've compiled the list, select the services and functions that are:

- Vital
- Required by regulation or law
- Required to maintain safety for clients and staff; and
- Necessary for the performance of other essential functions.

✓ Ensure your agency's financial resiliency

Increase in expenses and overall business interruption are common effects of flooding, so your first step to ensuring your agency's financial resiliency is to purchase flood insurance. (www.floodsmart.gov) Learn what your flood insurance does and does not cover, as well as detailed information about the claims process.

Other things to think about: Does your agency have a financial reserve? How about a line of credit? If so, what is the limit, the interest rate and who has access to it? Does your organization carry business interruption insurance? Discuss these issues with your management, banker and insurance provider.

√Take steps to ensure your staff are personally prepared.

Staff are an organization's most critical resource in an emergency. If your staff aren't prepared, your disaster planning is useless. Help support your workforce by linking them to personal and family disaster preparedness resources such as the American Red Cross website and make it a priority to regularly communicate your organization's flood planning efforts.

In the news:

Aging Northwest Dams Are a Concern for Federal and State Managers – *KPLU*

http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/kplu/news.newsmain/article/1/0/1538297/KPLU.Local.News/Aging.Northwest.Dams.Are.a.Concern.for.Federal.and.State.Managers

Corps of Engineers Awards Two Recovery Act Funded Dam Safety Projects at Howard Hanson Dam

http://www.prweb.com/releases/Corps of Engineers/Howard Hanson Dam/pr web2721054.htm

New

Critical Resources:

Flood insurance: www.floodsmart.gov

Personal and Family Preparedness:

http://www.redcross.org/flash/brr/English-flash/default.asp

Flood planning agencies & city web sites:

U.S. Geological Survey http://wa.water.usgs.gov/

King County Flood Services

http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/flooding.aspx

Public Health – Seattle & King County

http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/disaster.aspx

City of Auburn

http://www.auburnwa.gov/Home.asp

City of Kent http://www.ci.kent.wa.us/emergencyma nagement/index.aspx?id=1214

City of Renton http://www.rentonwa.gov/

City of Seattle http://www.seattle.gov/

City of Tukwila http://www.ci.tukwila.wa.us/